

## KEYWORDS

Anthropology, Brazil, institutionalization

---

## Brazil, anthropology in

Mariza Peirano

Universidade de Brasília

[mariza.peirano@gmail.com](mailto:mariza.peirano@gmail.com)

Word count: 7,155

---

## ABSTRACT

The development of anthropology in Brazil tells of a constant movement of both differentiation among neighboring disciplines and expansion into new fields of interest. When the social sciences were institutionalized in the 1930s, sociology was an encompassing subject that included what we today distinguish as anthropology, sociology, and political science. Over the years, a process of differentiation has taken place among the disciplines, but the major institutional links have been maintained among them. By the late 1960s, social anthropology had become the dominant, hegemonic orientation within anthropology, and the following decades saw a steady movement of inclusion of other topics besides anthropology's traditional definition as the study of indigenous peoples. Today, anthropology embraces a broad array of interests, both in a sizeable Portuguese-speaking community at home, and in significant international contacts abroad.

---

## MAIN TEXT

The development of anthropology in Brazil tells of a constant movement of both differentiation among neighboring disciplines and expansion into new fields of interest. When the social sciences were institutionalized in the 1930s, sociology was an encompassing subject that included what we today distinguish as anthropology, sociology, and political science. Over the years, a process of differentiation has taken place among the disciplines, but the major institutional links have been maintained among them. By the late 1960s, social anthropology had become the dominant, hegemonic orientation within anthropology, and the following decades saw a steady movement of inclusion of other topics besides anthropology's traditional definition as the study of indigenous peoples.

Today, anthropology embraces a broad array of interests, both in a sizeable Portuguese-speaking community at home, and in significant international contacts abroad.

After a brief historical setting, two angles are presented: the process by which a sociology lineage gave way to contemporary anthropology, and an ideal type approach to reveal the sort of alterities that are at stake in Brazil.

### <A> **Brief setting: the case for elite education**

European standards of intellectual life have always been a major source of inspiration and dialogue in Brazil, whether explicit or implicit, since the early 19th century, when the Portuguese Court moved to Rio de Janeiro in a flight from Napoleon's invasion of Portugal. Brazilian intellectuals sought approval (or lack thereof) from the old continent. Formal education, however, was behind. From 1808 to 1882, twenty-four proposals for the foundation of universities went before Parliament, but all were rejected. The Portuguese Crown prohibited the founding of universities in the country during the colonial period, and the Brazilian elite was educated at the few existing seminaries, at law schools, and, primarily, at Coimbra, Portugal, one of the oldest European intellectual centers of education. The local Portuguese-speaking elite was relatively homogeneous and able to deal with the administrative and political tasks of governing the country (Carvalho 1975). Independent Brazil was a monarchy from 1822 through 1889. Its second Emperor (D. Pedro II, 1825-1891), a patron of the arts and the sciences, encouraged and sponsored some independent schools (such as the *Escola de Minas de Ouro Preto*. The Mining School of Ouro Preto, in Minas Gerais), as well as stimulated the founding of ethnological museums: the *Museu Paulista*, founded in 1893, in São Paulo; the *Museu Paraense* in 1894, in Pará; and the reform of the *Museu Nacional*, in Rio de Janeiro, in 1890. Several geographical and geological commissions to explore the hinterland of the country followed suit. They observed the naturalistic tradition, set by the German explorers before them (for instance, Von Martius' expedition, from 1817 to 1820, and Von den Steinen's in 1884, and later from 1887 to 1888), but they primarily sought to provide information about the hinterland for the central government. Among such expeditions, the Rondon Expedition (from 1892 to 1930), aimed at exploring the interior in order to establish telegraph lines, ended up contacting aboriginal populations, which led to the creation, in 1910, of the governmental agency, *Serviço de Proteção aos Índios* (Indian Protection Service). Primarily, its aim was to pacify and assimilate the Indian population into the national society.

Higher education in Brazil was still restricted to independent schools of law, engineering and medicine, the latter being the cradle for many professed anthropologists around the country, interested as they were at the time in topics such as race and the prospects of a so-called Brazilian miscegenation, medical issues, criminality, degeneracy, often with a footing in folklore and psychiatry. An answer to the deep sense of "national inadequacy," motivated by a European perception of Brazil, was a pressing concern.

Upon the proclamation of the Republic in 1889, some tried to react to the European view of Brazil as degenerate by claiming that the country was progressing admirably, and that, given its natural resources, was destined for greatness; others tried to accommodate themselves to European theories of racial and climatic determinism, while another group rejected the European frame of reference, showing that Brazil's solution to its relative backwardness could not be achieved by dialogue with theories of determinism, but only

through careful analysis of the historical causes of its conditions at the time. The latter writers were the forerunners of a new understanding of the “Brazilian problem” that would come to the fore during the 1920s and 1930s, when a sense of “Brazilian modernism” was expressed, primarily as a literary movement.

It was in this context that, at the beginning of the 20th century, in the major urban centers, a movement for educational reform gained momentum, and the urgent need for it was considered at the time hierarchically superior even to economic development. For the “educators,” theirs was a sociological approach (based on the writings of Émile Durkheim) that proposed to solve the problem as one of a socio-political nature, and not merely administrative. The *Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Escola Nova* (Proclamation of the Pioneers of the New School), issued in 1932, proposed both reforms in the elementary schools and the creation of universities, and blamed the late 19th century political system for the emphasis on professional schools. The educators, as the social link between the literary men of the 1920s and the social scientists that followed them, became important figures in the foundation of the universities in the 1930s. That decade’s effervescence had peaked in 1922, during the Week of Modern Art in São Paulo to celebrate the first centennial of Brazilian Independence. This movement insisted that literature, music, and painting should draw from what was ultimately considered national, now in a positive disposition, despite the inspiration it had gained from the French and Italian avant-garde at the time. As a paradigmatic example, the well-known *paulista* Mário de Andrade, a mixture of writer, musician, poet, folklorist, conducted “ethnographic trips” in the period 1928-9, in which a group of artists visited the Northeast to gather popular motifs, expressions, music and syntax in an attempt to make them acceptable as part of the noble arts.

The increasing confidence in things Brazilian opened the way to a specific literary genre, the historico-sociological essay with literary overtones, which attained its fullest development at the time. Gilberto Freyre, a student of Franz Boas, had an optimistic message of Brazil as unique, ethnically mixed, a tropical civilization; Sérgio Buarque de Holanda wrote a concise, but influential, book on Brazilian roots through comparison between the Portuguese and Spanish moral settling patterns in Latin America; and Caio Prado Junior's was a groundbreaking work to provide a materialistic explanation of the colonial legacy.

The institutionalization of the social sciences changed this picture, shifting intellectuals’ social roles into separated and specialized academic slots. More than philosophy or the human sciences, as had been the case in other parts of the world, literature had performed until then the task of reflecting on social issues, and this state of affairs had to change. Self-literary men would continue to reflect on Brazilian social conditions in a creative and aesthetic vein, whereas social scientists would inherit the task of critically evaluating, analyzing, and eventually contributing in a rigorous scientific way to solving the questions of social and/or territorial integration of a country meant to be a proper modern nation-state. Social scientists were to become cultivated knowledgeable citizens, substituting with their analyses the socio-literary essays, through the search for academic excellence merged with a social commitment to a better society.

### <B> Why São Paulo?

Though schools of liberal arts had increased in number after the Proclamation of the Republic in the late 19th century, the new university experiments were launched in the

1930s, both in Rio de Janeiro (the capital of the country at the time) and in São Paulo. Rio's *Universidade do Distrito Federal* (UDF) was doomed to fail, as it could not survive the contradiction between the liberal ideology on which it was based, and the fact that as a federal university, it was under direct control of the central government. It survived for only four years. On the other hand, the *Universidade de São Paulo* became the irradiating center, and the socially recognized model, for the teaching of the social sciences, especially sociology, for decades to come.

If Brazil, as the seat of the Portuguese Empire, had constituted a historical anomaly in the early 19th century, São Paulo was another deviation at the beginning of the 20th century. The achieved economic development had not led to a change in political mentality. The state support to the new institutions was meant to produce a liberal intellectual elite who proposed a European model of representation, against the dominant patrimonial regime that had prevailed since colonial times. By 1932, frustration was rampant and it was clear that centralization, rather than decentralization, would result (Schwartzman 1975). It was in this context that the *Paulista* elite, comprising large scale coffee producers, newspaper owners, and the state government, envisioned that the social sciences and the humanities, together with pure science, were the necessary means to forge a political elite that would acquire the consciousness of the country's resources. A more enlightened governing elite ought stand on the common ground of a high and immediately disinterested universal culture. A radical project followed to educate an elite for political action, based on canons of scholarly competence. Instead of sending more students abroad, as had been the tradition, the new project was to attract European "missions" to spend time in Brazil. Influenced by the French and German university models, a group of intellectuals travelled to Europe to invite specialists, on temporary contracts, that would teach at the new Universidade de São Paulo (USP). The terms would be just long enough to educate the next generation of Brazilian students.

For the purpose of establishing the new Faculty of Philosophy, Science and Letters, a commission went to France and invited professors of sociology, history, philosophy, ethnology, and geography. Claude Lévi-Strauss' stay in Brazil, in the 1930's, was part of this initiative. In Italy, where, for the Brazilian liberal elite, the political ideas were questionable, invitations were made to mathematicians, physicists and geologists; and from Germany came professors of zoology, chemistry, and botany. At the same time, in São Paulo, a new school, dedicated mainly to sociology (*Escola Livre de Sociologia e Política – ELSP; Free School of Sociology and Politics*), was created by industrial sectors. More oriented to Anglo influences, professors were brought from the United States and from Britain. Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown spent two years during the 1940s at the ELSP, although his limited influence on students may have resulted from the fact that, at the time, French was the intellectual lingua franca. The combination of the two sources of influence, USP and ELSP, was to be essential to many students, since M.A.s were not awarded by the Universidade de São Paulo, and many students attended courses and obtained degrees from both institutions.

As philosophy had never existed in Brazil as an institutional discipline, USP's aim was not to educate philosophers, but to create a critical attitude toward Brazilian social and cultural aspects. The university was ready by 1934, but student applications were slow to come. The young generations in São Paulo were not yet prepared to follow a scientific career instead of the major professional ones of law, medicine, and engineering. It was necessary to approach pedagogy students, who hoped to follow a teaching career, to convince them of the important role of the new *Faculdade de Filosofia*, the variety of its

courses, and the new perspective that would open up for those who decided to follow them. In March 1935, the courses finally started, with 177 students enrolled, 64 of whom registered in the social sciences and philosophy.

An indirect specialization of intellectual roles followed suit. Whereas, during the first decades of the 20th century, social reflection had been carried out mostly by individual thinkers, such as historians, writers, journalists, lawyers, and educators, the appearance of the social scientists as of the 1930s to take responsibility for critically evaluating, in a rigorous way, the possibilities for social development and critical analysis slowly produced a scission between the socio-literary essays and the formal academic literature of the new disciplines.

The difficulty of recruitment of regular students contrasted with the enthusiastic support of the São Paulo elite, who followed the courses of the best-known professors like avid auditors. Members of well-known families, and even the governor himself, attended the classes. For students and professors though, a different picture emerged: foreign professors were concerned with the students' ability to acquire and understand the new ideas, and were surprised to find them knowledgeable of the latest Parisian intellectual fashion (Lévi-Strauss 1955). Brazilian students were ambivalent and more interested in judging professors' basic attitudes toward teaching in a less developed country. They wanted to make sure they would be free to pursue their independent views regarding their intellectual roles.

The following decades saw further movements in the trend toward differentiation, whereas the all-embracing sociology would slowly be dismembered as anthropology, sociology, and political science. Anthropology – then concerned basically with Indian populations – were not at the center of attention in terms of institutional prestige, despite significant names such as Herbert Baldus, Egon Schaden (1954), and, outside academia, Curt Nimuendajú (Baldus 1946). Divergences towards the sociology centered group have opened up the space for other interests in anthropology in a segmentation movement that, a couple of decades later, would allow the emergence of urban anthropologists, such as Ruth Cardoso and Eunice Durham (Magnani 2012). Sociology was the most encompassing, apt and prestigious of the disciplines to answer the call to help create a new knowledgeable political elite. It maintained hegemony among the social sciences, at least from the 1950s to the 1970s, when anthropology began to dispute the leadership.

#### <A> **The social sciences in Brazil: differentiation among disciplines**

Florestan Fernandes' (1920-1995) career provides a key example of the movement that gave proper shape to sociological concerns over time. It also illustrates what anthropology was not meant to be at that moment. As one of the first USP Philosophy Faculty students, later considered the founder of the "Paulista school of sociology," he faced the task of transforming into a "*sociologia feita-no-Brasil*" the legacy he had received from the French sociologists and ethnologists who had taught him, together with the German influence from the ELSP, where he had been awarded his M.A. By present standards, the beginning of his career was that of a true anthropologist; but it was an anthropology that did not take hold straight away. It made a comeback only three decades later.

#### <B> **Fernandes' Tupinambá**

In the unavoidable ambience of the modernist movement at the time, Fernandes' first challenge was to prove that a Brazilian student could solve a problem that even renowned ethnologists, such as Alfred Métraux (1902-1963), would not figure out: to reconstruct the social organization of the Tupinambá Indians inhabiting the country when the Portuguese arrived through the documentation left by so-called *cronistas* (chroniclers), namely, travelers, missionaries, colonizers. Encouraged by Herbert Baldus at the ELSP, Fernandes expanded a final paper to test the consistency of his early findings, and, in 1947, produced his M.A. thesis, *A Organização Social dos Tupinambá* (Fernandes 1963). For his doctoral dissertation presented at USP, he later amplified his analysis by focusing on warfare in *A Função Social da Guerra na Sociedade Tupinambá* (Fernandes 1970).

Proving that a Brazilian student could defy well-established facts revealed that intellectual (and "international") competence was at stake. Fernandes received full academic recognition in Brazil, and, with the support of Alfred Métraux, had the research results published in France. But, at stake in his project, there was also a commitment to the roots of Brazilian history. Surprisingly, both the publisher and the author discovered that important books may not sell well, and that the rigorous analysis of the zero moment of Brazilian history did not result in public appeal. Instead, Fernandes used his social recognition within academia to constitute a group of former students and recruit them to teach at USP. His Tupinambá feat should not be repeated. It also took several decades for the books to be acknowledged as truly anthropological, since the following generation just considered them as Fernandes' "functionalist phase" and, as such, to be overcome.

The disappointment with the 7-year dedication to reconstruct Tupinambá social organization indicated that a change in direction should follow. A "confrontation with society" was much needed to solve the dilemma of combining an academic career with a political viewpoint, a concern very much felt by most of Fernandes' generation. His answer was his participation in a UNESCO research project in the following years, in collaboration with his former USP French professor, Roger Bastide, with the purpose of establishing a scientifically acceptable definition of "race." Brazil was considered an example of racial democracy. His participation in this venture generated an important shift from the dominant approach to the optimistic national character interpretations by Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987), as well as the studies previously carried out in Bahia by Nina Rodrigues (1862-1906), and the pioneering approach of Arthur Ramos (1903-1946), who introduced psychiatry and psychoanalysis to fight the academic prejudices of the time. Instead of looking at race from the perspective of so-called primitives, neurotics, or the *alienated* in conditions of deficiency, for Fernandes the basis for analysis assumed that "race relations are social relations," and thus must be seen as part of the *class* system basically dictated by economic factors in the historical development of Brazilian society (Fernandes 1972). "Races" must be seen in social relations and not as unique entities.

The phase of "confrontation with society" had a continuation with Fernandes' writings on dependent capitalism and social classes in Latin America, and the bourgeois revolution in Brazil, namely, large sociological pictures of the development of Brazil after Independence and the seeds of what later would become "dependency theory." The 1964 military coup compulsorily retired many of the well-known USP sociologists of the time, providing an unexpected space for a renewed mode of doing (social) anthropology to flourish.

## <B> Inter-ethnic friction

The links of intellectual lineages materialized in a transversal generational way when Darcy Ribeiro (1922-1997) invited in 1953 one of Florestan Fernandes' students, Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira (1928-2006), to be his assistant in an anthropology specialization course to be offered at the newly-founded *Museu do Índio*, housed at the Indian Protection Service in Rio de Janeiro. São Paulo was the cradle for recruiting new talent.

Ribeiro had been educated at the ELSP, under the influence of Herbert Baldus (1899-1970), and, due to his readings of the classical socio-literary essays from the beginning of the century, Ribeiro refocused the traditional interest in Indians as alternative modes of society by bringing to the fore flesh-and-blood individuals and their destiny in terms of surviving contact with Brazilian society. From strict field research on Indian populations at the beginning of his career, he moved towards major concerns related to the theme of their acculturation into the greater society, and to the "expansion fronts" with which the national society presents itself to these groups (Ribeiro 1970).

Educated at USP under Fernandes, the new assistant, Cardoso de Oliveira resented the lack of theoretical sophistication in Ribeiro's approach to the types he had devised for explaining contact, but he did maintain interest in the Indian question – from a symbolic tiny minority of the Brazilian population to become a token of Brazilian society itself. Apart from the experiment of the Tupinambá studies, Cardoso de Oliveira received his inspiration from Fernandes' "race relations" approach. In this movement, anthropology maintained its interest in the study of Indians, but shifted to analysis of "interethnic relations," or in Cardoso de Oliveira's new formulation, "interethnic friction" (Cardoso de Oliveira 1963, 1978). Sociology was thus dismembered in institutional settings, anthropology moving its center of gravity from São Paulo to Rio, revising its immediate subject, including a dynamic dialectical approach to the topic of contact, and specially modifying its theoretical ambition, now formulated as "social anthropology," in contrast to Ribeiro's "cultural anthropology" perspective. Interethnic relations were based on the idea of contact as totalities themselves, unified by opposing interests, and not simply on separate entities in touch with one another. The primacy of social relations (economic, political and kinship) was to outweigh Ribeiro's static acculturation approach, a disagreement that helped trigger Cardoso de Oliveira's move to *Museu Nacional* to found a new specialization course, with the collaboration of anthropologist Luiz de Castro Faria, later transformed into the first graduate anthropology program in 1968.

"Interethnic friction" thus tried to focus on the situation of contact between Indian populations and the national society itself, not the Indians on the one hand, and the local population on the other, but the dynamic aspects of the contact. For Cardoso de Oliveira, the contact situation is "syncretic", i.e., "a situation in which two groups are dialectically 'unified' through opposing interests" (Cardoso de Oliveira 1963, 43). In this fashion, the author tried to overcome the inadequacy he saw both in the idea of "social change", coming from British authors, and in "acculturation," from American ones. Instead, he wanted to imprint on anthropology the same line that Brazilian sociologists (e.g. Florestan Fernandes) had developed, concentrating on the *relations* brought about by the contact.

A deep move occurred in this context: though Indian populations continued to be the cardinal topic of anthropology, Cardoso de Oliveira moved away from the traditional concerns of respected scholars, such as Herbert Baldus and Egon Schaden, to introduce Florestan Fernandes' then hegemonic sociological approach. Heir to both Ribeiro and

Fernandes, the theoretical framework of sociology and anthropology were not to be totally separated, and Indians were to be maintained as objects of study as long as they were seen within the totality of interethnic contact. From Fernandes, Cardoso de Oliveira also mastered the example of the significance of institutional basis to elevate anthropology to a respectable and eminent academic discipline, having later launched a second graduate program at the Universidade de Brasília, and subsequently collaborating with the faculty's graduate program of social sciences at the Universidade de Campinas, in the São Paulo state. In analytical terms, race questions evolving from the enslavement of Africans have resurfaced as interethnic relations concerning indigenous first nations.

The socio-genetic moment of the institutionalization of the social sciences in Brazil has resulted in a permanent tension between the aspiration for excellence and theoretical accomplishments – the consequence of direct contacts with European scholars to whom Brazilians compared and judged themselves – and the commitment to social causes to a better and more egalitarian society. “How do we show our readers we are socialists?” was a constant question for young social scientists. It was thus usual for the first generation of sociologists and anthropologists to get involved, later in their lives, and often directly, in politics after returning from exile due to the 1964 military coup. Florestan Fernandes had always been an advocate of educational matters, and, during his last years, was elected a representative for São Paulo in the National Congress to defend high quality public education. Darcy Ribeiro, occupied high government positions for many years, during which time he founded the Universidade de Brasília (1962). He was exiled by the 1964 military coup. Upon his return, as vice-governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro, he founded a second university, and, in a pioneering effort, launched a series of public full-time integrated educational systems for youngsters. When he died in 1997, he was a senator of the Republic as well. Sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso, one of Fernandes’ students, was also a senator and became Brazil’s President for two terms, from 1995 to 2003.

In terms of socially recognized acceptance and social efficacy, interethnic contact was a notion that proved to be impressive in the long run. It appealed to students of social sciences who had felt discouraged by the dictatorship from pursuing sociological studies. Interethnic friction opened up a possibility of studying social sciences with a renewed approach, allowing for renovation of the traditional study of Indian populations. The empirical study of contact had served both as a confrontation with Brazil's hinterland and as an expression of the need for inclusion in the larger society of the tiny, but highly symbolic, indigenous part of the population. With interethnic friction a sociologist/anthropologist had not just a constructive approach but a *theoretical* point of view. Given the fact that *Museu Nacional* was engaged in two large research projects during the 1960s, namely, the interethnic research and the Harvard-Central Brazil Project, there was a firm institutional basis for the launching of a graduate program in (social) anthropology. Together with their American fellow students, Brazilian graduate students at the time participated in both projects, such as Julio Cezar Melatti and Roberto DaMatta, in the company of Roque de Barros Laraia. The Harvard project was triggered by a then recent controversy between David Maybury-Lewis' and Lévi-Strauss' writings on the topic of dual organizations, and based on Curt Nimuendaju's classical Jê monographs. The major theoretical question laid in the comparison between different Jê groups so as to solve the anomaly they represented in the literature, namely, the existence of highly developed social systems in technically rudimentary societies (Maybury-Lewis 1974). *Museu Nacional* became a model and a reference for the new graduate anthropology programs in the country at that moment, and

graduate teaching in anthropology moved from a tutorial European style to an American model of required seminars and courses.

### <A> **Inclusion and expansion: concepts of difference**

The process that has occurred in anthropology around the world during the last few decades, the incorporation of research topics close to the ethnographers, has similarly occurred in Brazil in the past thirty years, but at an accelerated pace, and in a way guided by the launching of graduate programs, by the increasing recognition of the discipline, as well as by the impulse received from new combinations of theoretical approaches. Exoticism and eccentricity were never a mobilizing aspect for Brazilian social scientists. However a vigorous project of educating new graduate students in classical anthropological theory (sometimes including kinship studies as a requirement) has been maintained to the present day as a necessary and fundamental element for scholarly competence, and may be credited to the inheritance of the Harvard-Central Brazil Project and a new wave of doctorates taken in the elite American universities since then. Nation-building, in its features of integration of strata and of territorial incorporation, has continued to be a basic reference for anthropologists, but the last few decades have also seen a significant broadening of horizons. The combination of a sound theoretical education with “interested” social commitment has been a strong mark throughout. The different brands of Marxism that had dominated during the 1960s gave way to more nuanced and ethnographical approaches in (social) anthropology, without loss of larger macro sociological goals. Anthropology separated its approach from sociology proper by the emphasis on multiple senses of alterity, a foundation on the history of anthropology, and by adopting an ethnographic approach.

A broad panorama by means of (Weberian) ideal types related to the kind of *difference* conceived by anthropologists themselves can be discerned. They emerged in sequential form and, after a decade, each type had been incorporated into the mainstream. Cutting across the previous material presented, it offers an alternative angle to outline the present state of anthropological investigations in Brazil.

### <B> **Extreme alterity Brazilian mode**

Scathed in the interior of Brazil for centuries following Portuguese colonization, indigenous populations had been the destination of German explorers since the 19th century, when numerous ethnological expeditions had crossed the country in a search for answers to contemporary European questions of the state of “naturalness” suggested by the historic-cultural method. They had also collected artifacts for the European ethnological museums (among them, Karl von den Steinen, Paul Ehrenreich, Theodor Koch-Grünberg, and Max Schmidt) (Baldus 1954). It was not an attraction to Brazil that moved them, but inquisitiveness regarding the state of nature of “primitives.”

During the first decades of the 20th century, many foreign ethnologists established themselves in the old museums and new universities, and fostered the interest of new generations in Brazilian Indian populations. Throughout this period, the major involvement was in producing monographs about those populations, their relation to the local agrarian society being commented in smaller and side articles by ethnologists.

Before the 1980s, the Jê had been the most studied group in Brazil, following the lead of Curt Nimuendajú (1883-1945), a German ethnologist who had worked among Brazilian Indians for more than four decades, but had never applied for an academic position. Many of his monographs became accessible through translation into English by Robert Lowie in the United States. The Harvard-Central Brazil Project, born out of the David Maybury-Lewis controversy with Claude Lévi-Strauss in the 1960s, and grounded in Nimuendajú's work, was the most extensive research program related to this indigenous group. Maybury-Lewis had studied under Herbert Baldus when he first came to Brazil and got his M.A. from ELSP in São Paulo. Meanwhile, Tupi research had not come to a halt, as attested by the works of Herbert Baldus on the Bororo, Karajá and Tapirapé, Charles Wagley (1913-1991) and Eduardo Galvão (1921-1976) on the Tapirapé, Egon Schaden (1913-1991) on the Guarani, Darcy (1922-1997) and Berta Ribeiro (1924-1997) on the Urubu-Kaapor, and more recently, those of a younger generation from the *Universidade de São Paulo* and *Museu Nacional* in Rio de Janeiro.

A more recent Tupi research group has been the outcome of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's work and his students at *Museu Nacional* in Rio de Janeiro. Bringing back Florestan Fernandes' classical work on 16th century Tupinambá *cronistas* and, based on fieldwork among the Awareté Indians, Viveiros de Castro pursued the theoretical goal of substituting functional explanations for the concern with Tupi cosmology. A series of theoretical exchanges followed suit, and "perspectivism" became a novelty on the international scene, with debates being generated by French and British scholars (Viveiros de Castro 2012). In this scenario, new theoretical approaches have become as significant as ethnographic contributions. Classic anthropological topics offer a positive pathway to interlocution across borders, especially when indigenous populations are not conceived as "Brazilian Indians", but as Indians who are part of larger well-known groups in the literature, and who just happened to be situated in Brazil.

### <B> Contact with remoteness

The intellectual bricolage that resulted in the concept of interethnic friction, the concept developed by Cardoso de Oliveira in the 1960s, is the prototype of the idea that Indian populations and the national society should be seen not as separate unities, but as one whole, however dialectically separated they happen to be. The concept was a theoretical answer to Ribeiro's indigenist preoccupation, and it continued to develop throughout the following decades in the several graduate anthropology programs. It was a "Brazilian" answer to outright imported approaches, and a topic that boosted a series of research programs, causing them to expand. The study of the expansion fronts into the hinterland (a topic explored by O. Velho, 1972), relations between indigenists and government policies, between indigenous groups and the National Indian Foundation (*Fundação Nacional do Índio*, FUNAI), the role of the military and the demarcation of frontiers, the regulation of Indian rights in Brazil, the maintenance of their identities after becoming part of the urban environment, and the ever present subject of the demarcation of Indian lands, have been regular concerns.

The study of peasants was a facet connected to expansion fronts, turning them into themes of interest: internal colonialism, capitalist development and, more recently, agro-business. To the degree that concern with indigenous groups moved to the theme of contact, and then to peasants, peripheries of big cities had their day during the 1970s. At

the *Universidade de São Paulo*, a series of confrontations involving the institutional areas of anthropology and political science consolidated a space for urban studies, which had had its inception in the study of the periphery of the city, immigrants, popular festivals.

### <B> In the metropolitan centers

The occupation of Brazilian territory along the coast, and the continuous and violent deflection of indigenous communities to the hinterland, had an indirect effect on the distinction between sociology and anthropology. Cities were centers of cosmopolitan identification. When anthropologists moved away from the traditional topics of interest to incorporate the totality of Brazilian society, different paths were opened. Two major figures, Roberto DaMatta and Gilberto Velho, with their characteristic lines of study, emerged on the scene in the 1970s. Both inaugurated fruitful research projects.

Roberto DaMatta was educated in anthropology as part of the Harvard-Central Brazil Project of the 1960s. After publishing classical monographs both on the Apinajé and on Indian contact, a decade later, he shifted his interest to the national society as a whole. Inspired by Lévi-Straussian structuralism, he made himself heir to the classical socio-historical essays that had dominated the intellectual scene at the beginning of the 20th century. He granted a special place to Gilberto Freyre's and other predecessors' broad panoramas, such as Sérgio Buarque de Holanda and Caio Prado Junior, and proposed facing "the Brazilian dilemma" (DaMatta 1979), which intertwines individual orientations with emphasis on personal relations. He submitted national ritual events, such as carnival, Independence Day celebrations, small daily conventional sayings to current anthropological analysis; his line of inquiry has become a reference for the study of nationhood rituals.

Gilberto Velho (1943-2012) is known as the founder of an area of study previously hardly explored in Brazil, the "anthropology of complex societies" (G. Velho 1973). Inspired by the symbolic interactionism from the Chicago school of sociology, and the British social anthropology of the 1960s, Velho was an adept to interdisciplinarity at a time when the term was rarely applied, opening an extensive research field on sensitive urban topics, which his almost one hundred students have continued to expand. Having had his education in anthropology at the *Museu Nacional*, his doctoral degree was obtained at the *Universidade de São Paulo*, under anthropologist Ruth Cardoso, a regular practice until the 1980s in the then absence of such an academic level at *Museu Nacional* and elsewhere. Velho's interests encompassed topics such as middle class lifestyles, psychism (as cultural behavior is called in Brazil), drug consumption. An influential advisor and scholar, he was deeply involved in high-level national academic commissions. His research line later broadened to include urban violence, poverty, gender issues, urban kinship and family, music, politics, not only situating different urban phenomena in the cities, but trying to understand conditions of sociability in metropolitan areas, influencing a broad-ranging, extensive line of publications as editor.

Expanding to include urban phenomena, which had been the domain of sociology, anthropology has kept to ethnographical microscopic and comparative perspectives during the last few decades. A brief discussion about the nature of fieldwork in general in the 1970s, involving DaMatta and Velho, dismissed difficulties about researching at home: topics of interest expanded to new approaches to racial issues, popular festivals, politics, crime, citizenship, elections and political representation, feminism and gender studies,

*quilombos* (runaway slave settlements), indigenism, shantytowns, landless movements, large development projects, environmentalism.

### <B> **Extreme difference Brazilian mode**

Advance towards the larger world beyond Brazilian frontiers has until recently been intermittently conducted and directed mostly by individual opportunities. An expectation for international exchanges during the past decades has transformed the scene as a condition to improve the statuses of graduate programs. The path has not been aleatory, but has empirical and, more recently, theoretical implications.

Having as a mark the seminal comparison between Brazil and the United States regarding racial prejudice in the mid-20th century (Nogueira 1959), pioneer examples have been recorded (G. Velho 1995). The directions in which Brazilian anthropologists venture outside have been initially established by places where Brazilian students have undergone their doctoral dissertations (mainly the United States and France). Comparisons and theoretical considerations among different modes of doing anthropology, whether in India, Australia, Canada, Latin American countries, along with new proposals for alternative approaches to the discipline, have been strengthened. Familiarity with the Portuguese language is an initial incentive, and many investigators have been to Portugal's former colonies, such as Guiné Bissau, the Cape Verde Islands, East Timor, Mozambique, later on pursuing independent interests, as is the case in Africa. English has also become a language for fieldwork, and compelling topics of interest in Brazil have been compared elsewhere (in South Africa, for example). A comparison between habits and modes of occupying public spaces has increased over the years, there being Brazilian, European and American examples. Argentina, Syria, Colombia have also become foci of interest, resulting from anthropologists' family origins.

### <B> **Anthropological self-reflection**

Attempts at intellectual self-examination as part of the process of national examination has not escaped anthropologists. Whether investigating the subject in the country, or comparing it with other contexts, beginning in the 1980s, anthropologists have set in motion a series of studies about their craft. Given the socio-genetic character of the institutionalization of the social sciences, in which inspirational dialogues with external interlocutors have been usual (often in a one-way direction), topics have varied from biographies of social scientists in Brazil to critical evaluations of classical sociological authors. Studies related to the development of anthropology in museums and universities, comparisons between intellectual careers, intellectual biographies and memories, research on individual scientists and racial questions in Brazil, bibliographies of anthropology in Brazil, comparative projects related to the social sciences, historiographies of the discipline in the country, comparison between national styles of anthropology, analysis of the relationships between social science and Brazilian national ideology, are all focal points in many graduate programs.

### <A> **At home and abroad**

The expansion of graduate programs in anthropology has been followed and evaluated for several decades by governmental agencies linked to the Ministry of Education (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior – CAPES; Bureau for the Enhancement of Higher Education Staff) and to the Ministry of Science and Technology (Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico – CNPq, National Council of Scientific and Technological Development), which grade them comparatively and grant research funds to graduate programs and individual researchers. A pattern of seminar and course requirements, plus minimum standards for M.A. and Ph.D. degrees, has become the norm. Following the basic model established in the first graduate programs at *Museu Nacional* and *Universidade de Brasília* in the 1970s, and inspired in elite American university programs based on credits, the recent multiplication of graduate programs and Ph.D. candidates in different parts of the country has led to a recovery and a reconfiguration of local and regional pioneers of the discipline and alternative lineages of intellectual descent. Power relations among different graduate programs have become a subject of discussion, but have not as yet subverted the order of prestige.

Over the past two decades, for a country in which the social sciences were primarily concerned with the questions of nationhood, crossing national frontiers has become more accessible in terms of finance. State agencies have been increasingly granting funds for research abroad as part of doctoral research programs. Comparisons between and cooperation among different cases of “national” styles of anthropology have been put forward, some aiming at a new global scenario.

Today, anthropology in Brazil has expanded both in number of specialists and topics of interest; anthropologists can be found in different settings, from academia to non-governmental organizations, Congressmen advisors, environmental agencies, Indian protection services, public advocacies, media staff, minorities advisors. Anthropologists meet every two years at the congresses of the Brazilian Association of Anthropology (Associação Brasileira de Antropologia – ABA) and, together with sociologists and political scientists, at the annual meetings of the Association of National Graduate Programs and Research in the Social Sciences (Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Ciências Sociais – ANPOCS).

International communication, until recently almost entirely limited to center-periphery relations, or regional exchanges among social scientists within Latin America, especially with specialists in Mexico and Argentina, have multiplied in different directions. New political relationships in the recent decades point to the role of Indians as protagonists in the public scenario, a considerable change in a situation in which anthropologists traditionally acted as the in-between characters. Indians are being incorporated into graduate anthropology programs and becoming professionally and politically legitimate.

---

## SEE ALSO

Franz Boas; Brazilian Association of Anthropology; Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira; Émile Durkheim; Florestan Fernandes; Gilberto Freyre; Claude Lévi-Strauss; Robert Lowie; Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown; Arthur Ramos; Darcy Ribeiro; Anthropology in Unesco; Gilberto Velho

---

## REFERENCES

Baldus, Herbert. 1946. "Curt Nimuendaju, 1883-1945". *American Anthropologist* 48: 238-243.

----- . 1954. *Bibliografia Comentada da Etnologia Brasileira* [Commented Bibliography of Brazilian Ethnology]. São Paulo: Comissão IV Centenário da Cidade de São Paulo.

Cardoso de Oliveira, Roberto. 1963. "Aculturação e 'fricção interétnica'" [Acculturation and "interethnic friction"]. *América Latina* 6: 33-45.

----- . 1978. *A Sociologia do Brasil Indígena* [The Sociology of Indigenous Brazil]. Rio de Janeiro: Tempo Brasileiro.

Carvalho, José Murilo de. 1975. *Elite and State-Building in Imperial Brazil*. Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University [microform]. (Published in Portuguese in two volumes: *A Construção da Ordem. A Elite Política Imperial*, 1980; and *Teatro das Sombras. A Política Imperial*, 1988. ISBN 8520006183)

DaMatta, Roberto. 1979. *Carnavais, Malandros e Heróis. Uma Interpretação do Dilema Brasileiro*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar Editores. (Published in English in 1991 as *Carnivals, Rogues, and Heroes: An Interpretation of the Brazilian Dilemma*. Translation by John Drury. Notre Dame: Kellogg Institute for International Studies.)

Fernandes, Florestan. 1963. *A Organização Social dos Tupinambá* [Tupinambá Social Organization]. São Paulo: Difusão Européia do Livro.

----- . 1970. *A Função Social da Guerra na Sociedade Tupinambá* [The Social Function of War in Tupinambá Society]. São Paulo: Livraria Pioneira.

Maybury-Lewis, David. 1974. *Akwë-Shavante Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Magnani, José Guilherme. 2012. *Da Periferia ao Centro. Trajetórias de Pesquisa em Antropologia Urbana*. São Paulo: Editora Terceiro Nome.

Nogueira, Oracy. 1959. Skin Color and Social Class. *Plantation Systems of the New World*. Reprinted in *Vibrant* 5, 2008. Link: [http://www.vibrant.org.br/downloads/v5n1\\_oracy\\_en.pdf](http://www.vibrant.org.br/downloads/v5n1_oracy_en.pdf) (consulted May 16, 2015).

Ribeiro, Darcy. 1970. *Os Índios e a Civilização: A Integração das Populações Indígenas no Brasil Moderno* [Indians and Civilization: the Integration of Indigenous Populations in Modern Brazil]. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira.

Schaden, Egon. 1954. *Aspectos Fundamentais da Cultura Guarani* [Fundamental Aspects of Guarani Culture]. São Paulo: Difusão Européia do Livro.

Schwartzman, Simon. 1975. *São Paulo e o Estado Nacional* [São Paulo and the National State]. São Paulo: Difel.

Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo. 2012. *Cosmological Perspectivism in Amazonia and Elsewhere*. Masterclass Series I. Manchester: HAU Network of Ethnographic Theory.

Velho, Gilberto. 1973. *A Utopia Urbana: um Estudo de Antropologia Social*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar Editores.

-----, ed. 1995. *Quatro Viagens. Antropólogos Brasileiros no Exterior* (Four travels. Brazilian anthropologists abroad]. *Comunicações do PPGAS*, 6. Rio de Janeiro: Museu Nacional/UFRJ.

Velho, Otávio. 1972. *Frentes de Expansão e Estrutura Agrária*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar Editores.

---

## FURTHER READING

Melatti, Julio Cezar. 1984. "Antropologia no Brasil: um roteiro" [Anthropology in Brazil: an overview]. *Boletim Informativo e Bibliográfico de Ciências Sociais (BIB)* 17, 1-92.

Peirano, Mariza. 1981. *The Anthropology of Anthropology: The Case of Brazil*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University.

Peirano, Mariza. 2008. "Brazil: Otherness in Context". In *A Companion to Latin American Anthropology*, edited by Deborah Poole, 56-71. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Schwartzman, Simon. 1991. *A Space for Science: The Development of the Scientific Community in Brazil*. Pittsburgh: The Pennsylvania State University Press.